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ABSTRACT

Described in this report is a project undertaken to examine the interaction between those who work in responsive-service systems, such as fire departments, the police, and the public utilities, and the urban citizens they serve. An overview of two issues is given: the significance of human interaction in response-service delivery during urban emergencies and the role of social science research in solving urban problems. The report then traces the development of the project, including the selection of the participating cities (Cincinnati, Kansas City, Miami, Rochester, San Diego, and Stamford) and their Task Forces. At each research stage, comments from the project staff illuminate aspects of both the developing research agenda and the collaborative method used to achieve it. The report concludes with the recommendations of the project staff, directed mainly toward the "human dimension'" in responsive-service delivery during urban emergencies and toward certain changes in the conduct of future projects similar to this one. (Author/EB)

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THE HUMAN DIMENSION IN URBAN RESPONSIVE SERVICES:

TOWARD COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH

by Morton Bard and Harold M. Proshansky

A report of the project on
Responsive Services and the Quality of Urban Life

conducted by
The Center for Social Research
of the
City University of New York

with the collaboration of the
International City Management Association

under a grant from the
National Science Foundation

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INTRODUCTION

Urban environments are physically and socially complex. They are densely populated, alive with the energy of human activity. These qualities have both positive and negative effects on the people who live in cities. The diversity of urban life provides opportunities that are unavailable elsewhere--museums, galleries, theaters, and shops abound; exposure to a variety of cultures and life-styles is almost inevitable. But the streets of a city are also full of strangers, people who feel no special responsibility for one another. It may be easy to maintain a sense of privacy in an urban environment, but it is also easy to feel alone. The psychological sense of security that comes from being connected to a social network can be difficult to achieve. And so the quality of urban life may be colored somewhat by a sense of anonymity and insecurity.

Feelings of insecurity are heightened in an emergency--a fire, for example, or a personal crime or a blackout. During these brief and intense "crisis" experiences, the citizen is helpless, overwhelmed by a situation that seems out of control. In a city, emergencies are likely to occur when one is among strangers, away from people who might help because they already know and care about the person under threat. Thus, the urban citizen is especially dependent upon the people in such responsive service systems as fire departments, the police, and the public utilities. The manner in which the people in these systems provide emergency services has a significant impact on the citizen's sense of security and thus on the quality of urban life.

Consider, for example, the dilemma of a young man who comes home from work one day to find his apartment burglarized. The thieves have torn the place apart, strewing his possessions from one end to the other. Stunned, he begins to assess the damage--his television set, stereo, clock radio, and several cameras are missing. The burglars even went through his closet and took all of his suits. The victim picks up the phone and dials the police.

The phone rings and rings; finally a police officer answers, takes the victim's name and address, and says that someone from the department will come and take a report. When the officers arrive sometime later, they are courteous and thorough, but they are clearly not impressed by this crime. The thieves are long gone; no one has been physically hurt. They tell the victim it could have been worse and remind him that, after all, he did leave his windows unlocked. After the officers leave, the young man tries to clean up the mess, but he feels depressed, alone and afraid.

The behavior of the police officers in this case has been perfectly correct by the standards of almost any department in the country. Yet the officers have missed an opportunity to be of more than routine service to a victim in need. Replaying the scene with some modifications may help to illustrate. Suppose, again, that the victim picks up his phone and dials the police. On the first

ring, he is answered by a dispatcher who is able to send a patrol car to the victim's home quickly. The police listen with interest and sympathy as the victim shows them the damage and helps them construct a list of the stolen goods. The officers talk with the victim about how the burglars might have gained access to the apartment; they suggest that he may want to reinforce his window locks to help prevent another burglary. Finally, they suggest that he call a friend to come and help with the cleanup. After the officers have left, the victim and his friend talk about how helpful the police have been and how glad they are they can count on them in an emergency.

Responsive-service systems such as police departments are usually evaluated in terms of the speed and efficiency with which they handle emergencies. But there is another dimension of their work that is just as crucial: the psychological and social interaction between those who provide service and those who receive it. This human dimension often determines the satisfaction experienced by both the service provider and the service receiver. When the human aspects of their encounter are ignored, the problems that arise during the emergency may be intensified for either or both parties.

The National Science Foundation has supported an effort by the Center for Social Research of the City University of New York (CUNY) to examine the interaction between those who work in responsive-service systems and the urban citizens they serve. The objective of this first effort was to develop a series of questions about the human dimension in responsive services. One final outcome of the project was a research agenda for further study in this area.

The International City Management Association (ICMA), a professional and educational organization for appointed municipal administrators in local governments, assisted in the project. They provided the practical expertise that "made it happen" by helping to select the participating cities, enlisting the interest of receptive city managers and serving as a resource during project activities. The responsive services selected for the project included the public safety systems (fire and police) and the public utility system. Six cities that represent the diversity of American urban life were chosen as participants--Cincinnati, Ohio; Kansas City, Missouri; Miami, Florida; Rochester, New York; San Diego, California; and Stamford, Connecticut.

It was decided at the onset of the project that the significance of the human dimension could be seen most clearly through a combination of several points of view: Service providers and receivers have the practical experience needed to identify the factors involved in the human interaction; behavioral scientists have the technical capacity to translate these factors into questions that can be addressed by the methods of social-science research. The collaboration between those who are actually involved in emergencies and those who want to study them provided a unique method for examining this question.

A Task Force was created in each participating city to address two questions: 1) Which aspects of the human encounter between service providers and service receivers in emergency situations most significantly affect the quality of urban life? 2) How can these aspects be studied? Each collaborative Task

Force was composed of five people: a city manager, administrative and union representatives of the police, fire and/or public utilities systems, and a behavioral or social scientist. The Task Forces were constituted in the spring of 1977 and reported to the project staff in the fall of that year.

On December 1 and 2, 1977, a conference was held at the CUNY Graduate School and University Center in New York City on "Responsive Services and the Quality of Urban Life." The six Task Forces and the project staff met together for these two days to clarify and refine the ideas developed by each individual Task Force. Their ultimate goal was the preparation of an agenda for future research. During the first day of meetings, a number of invited guests also participated. Like the Task Force meetings, the conference provided opportunities for collaboration between behavioral researchers and responsive-service practitioners.

Among the findings of the project, some of the most exciting were surprises, results that had not been anticipated by most of the people involved. One of these had to do with the preconceptions and attitudes of the participants. Both researchers and service providers found that they had harbored certain inaccurate stereotypes about the "other side." Some researchers expected the service providers to be so oriented toward day-to-day, nuts-and-bolts matters that they would have no interest in rigorous theoretical discussion. The researchers discovered to their delight that this was not the case--the practitioners were extremely knowledgeable about theoretical issues and quite sophisticated intellectually.

On the other hand, some of the practitioners expected the researchers to be arrogant know-it-alls, incapable of listening to contributions from the real-world perspective. They, too, were pleasantly surprised; the researchers were reality oriented and open and willing to learn. In short, the quality of the exchange between responsive-service practitioners and behavioral researchers exceeded their expectations. It was not just a mechanistic exchange in which one provided the problems and the other provided research methods for solution. Instead, a true dialogue among peers took place with the potential for joint problem-solving on a high conceptual level.

Another unexpected finding was the degree of commonality in the identification of problems and issues among the various responsive services. The project staff were careful to select cities that were different from one another and to include representatives from fire, police, and public utility services on each of the Task Forces so that the widest possible group of problems and issues would emerge. Once this diverse group had been assembled, however, they all seemed to be talking about the same issues. Most areas of concern did not originate in any single responsive service; interracial tensions between service provider and service receiver were as likely to be found in fire departments as in police departments. Cities that are very different are nevertheless plagued by similar problems; Miami, Florida, and Rochester, New York, both have disaster-management problems although in one case the cause is hurricanes and in the other it is blizzards.

A third important finding of the project was the significance of the col-

laborative method employed. Practitioners from responsive-service systems and behavioral scientists were able to work together to focus on urban problems that can be addressed by research. This kind of collaboration promises to bridge the traditional distance between these two groups, a distance that has sometimes been characterized by mistrust. A great deal was learned during the project about the value of such collaborative efforts and about the conditions under which they are most likely to succeed.

The work of this project has been done in a time when American cities are under extraordinary stress. Throughout the country at local, state, and national levels, there is an increasing demand for more productive and economical management of cities. In this crisis atmosphere, the role of human relationships in the quality of urban life is easily forgotten. But the survival of our cities may well depend upon the degree to which human questions are raised and answered in the next decades.

This report describes the project in some detail. It begins with an overview of two issues: the significance of human interaction in responsive-service delivery during urban emergency situations and the role of social-science research in solving urban problems. The report then traces the development of the project from the selection of the participating cities and their Task Forces through the work of the conference. The research issues are presented as they evolved through the stages of the project. At each stage, comments from the project staff illuminate important aspects of both the developing research agenda and the collaborative method used to achieve it. The report concludes with the recommendations of the project staff.

The project described here is a first effort to address an area of inquiry that has been largely ignored. It involved the exploration of a relatively unfamiliar concept--the human interaction between service provider and service receiver--and it used a novel method--the collaboration between researchers and practitioners. It was designed to test both the significance of the concept and the usefulness of the method.

The project staff have made many critical comments and recommended certain changes in the procedures used. This is as it should be. The report is intended to stimulate further collaborative research on the human dimensions of urban life, and it is hoped that these efforts will benefit from what has been learned in this project. In keeping with the belief that collaboration is possible only when information is accessible to all parties, the report avoids the specialized language of any professional group. It will be widely disseminated among all interested parties including those in the research community, those who manage cities, those who are involved in the delivery of responsive services, and those who live in cities and depend upon these services.

The authors would like to thank the National Science Foundation for funding this effort, the ICMA for its resourceful support during the project, and the six Task Forces, whose members are listed on the next two pages. The creation of this report has required special effort because the meetings held during the project were not intended to produce papers or other public documents.

We want to acknowledge the contributions of Dr. Harriet Connolly, who edited the lists of researchable issues at several points in their development and drafted a preliminary report of project findings; Dr. Phyllis Grodsky, who helped with editing and conceptualization in the early stages; Ms. Dawn Sangrey, who served as editor and writer for the final draft of this report; and Mrs. Myra Damsky and Ms. Millie Chebba, who provided secretarial services.

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AN OVERVIEW OF PROJECT ISSUES

The quality of urban life is determined in part by the interaction between the urban citizen and the urban environment. People who live in large cities are confronted by a complex physical and social environment every time they walk out their front doors. While cities provide opportunities such as museums, theaters, and prestigious jobs, they also foster a kind of social isolation. Urban areas tend to be large geographically, and people move fairly long distances from home to work to places of entertainment and other activities. The social networks of those who live or work in cities--their families, friends, and acquaintances--are, therefore, spread over a variety of locations.

In a city, the people you work with are not necessarily the people you live with or the people you play with. The geographical separation of home, work place, and recreation means that it is unusual in large cities for a neighbor to be a coworker, a relative and/or a close friend as well. Urban citizens tend to relate to one another on a limited number of dimensions. As a consequence, their sense of responsibility for one another is limited according to the specific roles they play in each other's lives.

The social effects of the urban environment may be amplified in an emergency situation. Consider what happens at the scene of a fire in a large city. A crowd gathers. Among the crowd may be people who want to help, but they are not likely to be the closest friends or family of the victims. While the sympathy and comfort offered at such times by neighbors or by kind strangers is important, it is also limited. Their sense of social responsibility for the victims is likely to be short-term and rather superficial. An urban family that has been burned out may even find themselves on the street with no one to help but the strangers who came to fight the fire and the strangers whose job it is to provide food and shelter for fire victims.

Responsive-Services and the Urban Citizen's Sense of Security

People feel more secure if they are reasonably certain of being helped in an emergency situation. When a person is part of a network of family and friends who are readily available in times of need, that network provides a measure of psychological security; he or she is surrounded by familiar people who can be depended upon to give help in urgent circumstances. But in a complex urban environment, a person who suddenly needs help may be outside of his or her social network, surrounded by strangers. The urban emergency victim cannot be assured of immediate help from friends.

As society has become more complex, particularly in urban environments, the social responsibility for providing help in crisis situations has been transferred from friends and family to strangers, people who help because it is their job to do so. Fire fighters, police officers, and public utility personnel are among those on whom the citizen depends in time of threat. The urban dweller's sense

of psychological security may be directly related to his or her perception of how dependably responsive-service systems such as these will meet the citizen's needs in an emergency.

Whether or not people can expect to get the kind of help they need when they <u>really</u> need it is an important part of their internal sense of safety. Feelings of security come from the perception that the environment will be responsive to the individual under threat. In fact, the citizen's expectation about what will happen to him or her in an emergency is a significant aspect of the quality of his or her life.

Human Interactions in Emergency Situations

Technical competence and response readiness are essential aspects of the delivery of emergency services. A police officer must be able to respond quickly when a crime in progress is reported. Those who provide emergency utility service must understand the dangers of a broken gas main. Fire fighters must know how to determine whether everyone is out of a burning building. The service provider must be prepared to make difficult decisions and to act on them, sometimes in a life-or-death situation. In each of the responsive services, the freedom and capability to act with speed and good judgment are crucial.

Yet the professional skills involved in using equipment, responding with speed, understanding emergency procedures, and exercising good judgment are only part of the story. There is another dimension that is just as important. We call it "the human dimension." When a police officer tells a family that one of their members has been injured, or a fireman rescues someone from a burning building, or a utilities worker comes to a private home to repair a downed power line, what occurs is a personal encounter between human beings. The people who provide emergency services interact with the people who need the services. Two or more individuals communicate, verbally and nonverbally. During the emergency, each of them has feelings and thoughts which reflect individual beliefs and expectations. Encounters between service providers and service receivers can be seen as short-term but well-defined human relationships.

The project described in this report is concerned with these relationships. It focuses on an unfamiliar aspect of emergency-service delivery: not the response time or the arrest rate, but the human reactions of the people most directly involved. What happens between the service provider and the service receiver in those tense moments when one comes to the aid of the other? The project sought to identify significant dimensions of the provider's role, the recipient's role, and their interaction. It raised questions such as these: What are the expectations of the service provider who responds? How do these expectations affect the interaction between them? How is a crisis situation different from other human encounters, and what special constraints are introduced by the requirements of the situation? In short, the encounter between the service provider and the citizen in an emergency was seen as a special kind of relationship, and the project sought to clarify the important dimensions of that relationship.

One of the most useful stories told during the work of the project may help to illustrate the significance of the human dimension. The story is about a young police officer who was assigned to an emergency services unit right after he had graduated from the police academy. His partner in the patrol car was an older, more experienced officer who had worked in crisis situations for many years. After the two had responded to several emergency calls together, the older man questioned the younger one about his previous training. The new officer confessed that he had had no training in police emergency procedures.

His partner turned toward the back seat of the patrol car and pointed out a large, portable searchlight. "From now on," he said, "I want you to follow me and carry this light with you at all times whenever we go out on a call."

The new officer was puzzled. "Even in broad daylight?"

"Especially in broad daylight!"

"Why should I do that?"

"Because if you carry the light you will look like you know what you're doing. And that makes people feel better."

The older officer was expressing his understanding of an important part of his professional role in emergencies: the need to act with competence and confidence, and thus to reassure the victims by bringing a sense of order to chaotic situations. He understood that--in a very real way--this competent, authoritative demeanor was a vital and reassuring part of emergency assistance.

Toward a New Definition of Productivity

The productivity of responsive-service systems is usually measured exclusively in terms of such factors as cost effectiveness, rapidity of response, and technical efficiency. Each of these plays an important role in the quality of service delivery, but when attention is focused only on such factors, the importance of the human dimension can be overlooked.

The project described in this report argues for a broader and somewhat different definition of productivity than the one that usually obtains. It also provides a way to begin to approach the problems involved in measuring the human interaction in emergency-service delivery.

At its heart, productivity measurement is an effort to quantify and evaluate the work of a system. It attempts to answer this question: How effectively does this system do what it is supposed to do? When it satisfies the needs that it has been created to meet with efficiency and economy, we call the system productive. To oversimplify somewhat, then, manufacturing is productive when it turns out the best possible goods at the least possible cost. By counting, tabulating, and computing measures of input and output, one can arrive at a

straightforward assessment of industrial productivity.

Many attempts to assess productivity in the public sector--that is, of service systems such as police, fire, and welfare departments--have assumed this manufacturing model. Inputs such as personnel and equipment costs are compared with outputs such as clients served or criminals arrested. But this kind of productivity model fails to take account of the essential difference between the activities of government and industry. It does not address the goals question: "What needs has this system been created to meet?"

A responsive-service system is productive when it meets the victim's needs for help. The quality of the human interaction between service provider and service receiver is a crucial dimension of the help that the victim receives. The project suggests that the short- and long-term effects of service delivery, including its evaluation by citizens, are affected by the human interactions that occur during the delivery of emergency services. The project therefore argues for the inclusion of the human dimension in the evaluation of responsive-service systems. It views the human interaction as a significant--and usually unacknowledged--factor in responsive-service productivity.

Including the human dimension in responsive-service productivity measurement poses a number of difficulties. First of all, such a definition is unfamiliar. Both the service-delivery systems themselves and those outside of the systems who are charged with their evaluation are accustomed to focusing on other, more technical aspects of service delivery. One way in which fire departments are commonly evaluated, for example, is according to the technical proficiency and speed with which they are able to extinguish fires. This measure of productivity is easy to understand; its relationship to the effectiveness of the fire department is obvious.

However, as has already been suggested, the way in which a fire fighter deals with the victim's social and psychological situation also affects the outcome of the emergency. This dimension of the fire department's function is not so familiar--most people do not think about human interaction when they think about the productivity of the fire department. Yet, the victim may need more help after the fire has been extinguished, and in today's cities, where fire fighters often take the place of friends and family, there may be no one else to care about the victim.

Including the human interaction in productivity assessment is not only unfamiliar, it is also technically difficult. Human encounters are much harder to measure than response time. Any encounter between two people is an incredibly complex phenomenon. It involves the attitudes, values, and expectations that each person brings to the encounter; the verbal and nonverbal exchange between them; and the effects of the social context, the situation in which they meet. It is difficult enough to quantify these aspects of an interpersonal exchange in the controlled environment of a social-science laboratory. In a real-life situation, the problems involved in measuring and evaluating the encounter increase geometrically.

There is a third difficulty in including the human dimension in productivity assessments--and this is perhaps the greatest barrier of all. It was once widely believed that the practical world of business and everyday enterprise was a sphere in which it was inappropriate to give a high priority to human feelings. The stereotype of the heartless, toughminded businessman is an exaggeration of a cultural expectation: Those who are concerned with "getting things done" in the "real world" should proceed as if they have little concern for emotional needs, either their own or those of other people. In recent years the importance of acknowledging human needs has become more widely accepted, but the earlier attitude still influences many systems.

Thus, in responsive-service systems, administrative and political objectives may make it hard for service deliverers to give adequate attention to the human dimension. In some systems neither the job description nor the training of personnel includes much consideration for the human interaction between service provider and service receiver. The human needs of practitioners within the system may also be neglected. In some systems, a person who insists upon the importance of human concerns may even be thought of as "soft" or "idealistic."

For all of these reasons, then, the importance of the human dimension in responsive-service system productivity has been overlooked. But if, as this project suggests, productivity concerns include human relationships and their effects on the quality of service delivery, then the human dimension must be evaluated. How can this be done? The project provided a method for beginning to answer this question.

Solving Urban Problems: The Role of Social Science Research

The social sciences include anthropology, economics, political science, psychology, and sociology. Each of these disciplines focuses on some aspect of human behavior, trying to understand its causes and consequences by analyzing the behavior systematically, using scientific methods. Traditionally this study has been largely carried out in a university setting where problems can be examined slowly and carefully in an atmosphere that is deliberately separated from the rest of the world.

Practitioners--people who work in the nonacademic "real world" of practical systems--rarely have the luxury of analyzing a problem with care over time. They are much more likely to have to act quickly, pressed by the external demands of the situation. This is especially true of systems, such as those that deliver responsive services, in which dealing with urgent situations is part of the day-to-day job. Yet the world certainly has problems that might best be solved by application of the methods of social-science research.

Conceiving and conducting research which deals with fundamental theoretical questions and--at the same time--addresses "real world" problems has been an illusive goal in the social sciences. As the problems of society grow more complex, social science is often regarded as a logical resource in seeking solutions.

There are, however, many barriers. The methods of applied research are at a relatively early stage of development and are often crude. Rewards, custom, and training within the social sciences do little to encourage research outside the traditional academic arena.

Most commonly, there have been two ways in which social science has approached areas of practical concern. (1) The social scientist, in testing theories and/or gathering information, secures the cooperation of a "real-world" system in achieving his or her research objectives. The practitioner system may benefit from the information developed; it is, however, a totally passive entity, involved neither in the asking nor in the answering of questions. Generally, the arrangement is viewed by practitioners as born of political expediency, a kind of short-lived reform, or simply as a "rip-off." (2) The social scientist markets his or her skills in collecting and interpreting information, doing <u>for</u> the practitioner system what it cannot do for itself. Again, the system may acquire knowledge; however, in the process it is placed in a position of dependence. Resentment at the nonreciprocal nature of the arrangement can be expressed through organizational resistance and failure to accept recommended changes.

Practitioners and policymakers, accustomed as they are to being active, are often impatient with the slow process of academic knowledge building. Even more important is the fact that practitioners are traditionally involved neither in problem identification nor in the actual research process. It is not surprising that they often feel the results of social research do not serve their needs.

Little headway has been made either in applying the methods and insights of social research to the world of practical affairs or in testing laboratory-derived assumptions about human behavior "out where the action is." Usually this linkage problem is approached as a question about the application of existing research: How can the products of social research be used in the real world? Underlying this question is the assumption that the basically objective and remote methods of social science produce theory and knowledge that can then be translated into practical principles or directives for those who must deal with social problems.

Our experience in this project has enabled us to see the problem differently and to frame another question. We now ask: How can social research be conducted so that the social scientist and the practitioners <u>share</u> in the production of theory and knowledge? To ask the question in this way is to make some very different--perhaps even radical-- assumptions about the appropriate conduct of social research. It suggests that identification of research problem areas is a joint enterprise, that useful and valid research can result from a collaboration between the professionals who build knowledge and those who will apply it. It also suggests that the reason social-science researchers have had such a difficult time applying the results of their work is that they may have been asking interesting but impractical questions.

The topic of the human dimension in emergency service delivery is an ideal vehicle for extending both the theory and method of applied social science.

The project involved the active participation of those who provide and receive responsive services in addition to including those experienced in the conduct of behavioral research. Participants reviewed and studied a series of emergency encounters in order to formulate hypotheses about the principles of interaction which obtain. The ground-rules were a change from standard practice: Participants were true collaborators, with all members coaccountable as to the outcome. It was hoped that such research-practitioner linkage at the early stage of research conceptualization would yield insights of greater theoretical and practical value than would have resulted from analyses by either group alone.

When those who have direct experience with urban problems are involved in the definition of the research problem and work with social scientists in the search for a solution, the usefulness of the research in the real world is virtually assured. Because the researcher and the practitioner are coaccountable and equally involved, the need to translate knowledge into action becomes unnecessary. Knowledge and action are a functional unity.

The role and identity of the practitioner in this collaboration is essential for its success. The early, committed, and accountable participation by line-level personnel in human service delivery systems is essential if knowledge and action are to be functionally integrated in social research. Such participation informs the research design in ways that cannot possibly be done from the perspective of the researcher alone. Parameters of design and evaluation can be introduced that are known only to line-level practitioners and these add significant validity to the research.

Moreover, line-level participation in the planning and conduct of action research promises to add immeasurably to the research product's credibility within the practitioner system. Such participation communicates to other service deliverers within the organization (and indeed, within the entire institution) that the social innovation has merit. The work is likely to be seen as advantageous and be accepted because "our people were involved."

Finally, the technology-transfer dilemma is addressed. Research data are available to policymakers because they are generated within the auspices of the practitioner system rather than through an independent research system. Thus, the likelihood is increased that findings will find expression in practice.

There is little doubt about the commonality of interests between social service practitioners and social scientists. For the former, successful intervention requires an understanding of what people are all about; for the latter, testing theories and building knowledge requires access to people for study. It would seem to be an ideal basis for a symbiotic arrangement, that is, a coming together of dissimilar species for some mutual advantage. Yet, too often in the past, associations which, in theory, appeared to promise only benefit, have proven unsatisfactory to researcher, practitioner, or both. Why? Perhaps it is because we have been satisfied with simply cooperating, and have failed to seek true, active collaboration. Genuinely fruitful relationships do not consist of one active partner and one passive one. Instead, there is mutuality of purpose

and commitment, joint decision-making, some interchangeability of function, and coaccountability as to the outcome.

We are not suggesting here that practitioners become researchers or that researchers turn to practice. To the contrary. It is the different backgrounds and skills of the two parties that make the collaborative model an exciting one. The different perspectives and functions complement one another and, in the process, yield new kinds of information and understanding.

The needs of urban dwellers and of those who serve them demand that the gap between the social scientist and the responsive-service provider be closed. This project was a first effort to deal with the substantive and methodological barriers to such collaboration.

THE PROJECT

Phase One: Selecting Cities and Task-Force Members

The work of the project began during the fall and winter of 1976 when Professor Morton Bard and President Harold M. Proshansky, both of The Graduate School and University Center of the City University of New York (CUNY), met with Ms. Lisa Stevenson of the International City Management Association (ICMA) to discuss selection criteria for the cities that would be invited to participate. Two sets of criteria emerged in these early discussions; the goal was to invite a group of cities that would represent the diversity of American life and that would meet the specifications of the project design.

These criteria were established to help ensure diversity:

1. The cities should be drawn from many different geographical areas of the nation.

2. Cities should have different socioeconomic and ethnic mixes in their populations.

3. There should be varying arrangements of population density and land area, including cities that are relatively small and compact and cities that are more spread out.

4. The cities should vary as much as possible in climate.

The specifications of the project dictated these criteria for city selection:

1. Each city should have a population of at least 250,000.

2. Since ICMA's previous involvement with the cities was to be a major means by which participation would be ensured cities with a city-manager form of government were to be given priority.

3. Each city's manager had to be intellectually able, a good administrator, and receptive to the project concepts.

4. Since the behavioral scientist on the Task Force was to fill a key role, each city had to have available a university or similar institution to serve as a behavioral-science resource.

A list of cities was drawn up, discussed, and revised. During March and April, 1977, Ms. Stevenson called the city managers of each city on the list to explain the project and invite their participation. Six cities eventually accepted the invitation: Cincinnati, Ohio; Kansas City, Missouri; Miami, Florida; Rochester, New York; San Diego, California; and Stamford, Connecticut.

In each participating city, the city manager or other city official was asked to recommend local responsive-service administrators, union representatives, and a behavioral scientist who might be willing and able to serve as Task Force members. He was also asked to name people in any of these roles who would not be effective Task Force members in his view. From these recommendations, the Task Force in each city was constituted.

Phase One: Comments

The criteria used for selecting the cities resulted in the sought-after diversity; the participants were a fairly representative cross-section of large American cities. As the work of the project progressed, however, it became clear that most of the problems and issues raised were as likely to be found in one city as in another. Since the topic of the project was human interaction, there were few differences among the cities--apparently service providers and service receivers behave in much the same ways no matter what city they are in. Thus, it may be that it is not essential to cover all of the regions of the country in a subsequent project of similar design.

Some cities that were invited to join the project were not able to do so. It should be noted that not all cities are available to participate in projects such as this one. Internal conflicts, municipal elections, labor negotiations, and the demands of other research projects may understandably reduce the motivation of a city to participate at any given time. The early enthusiasm of those who accepted the invitation to participate is surely due, at least in part, to the fact that all but one of the city administrators knew Ms. Stevenson and had worked with her before.

The importance of ICMA's contribution as liason with the cities cannot be overemphasized. It enabled the project staff to identify city managers who would be receptive to the project.

Having the Task Forces chosen by the city managers had several positive effects. The Task Force members in each city were personally compatible and able to work together. The mistrust or suspicion that sometimes is felt between responsive-service practitioners and behavioral researchers was absent here because the researcher was already known. Since the researcher was designated by the city manager, the researcher did not need to earn credibility with either the city manager or the responsive-service practitioners in his or her Task Force.

In retrospect, however, it is felt that the behavioral scientists in this effort were at a disadvantage because they were not sufficiently informed about the project before they committed themselves to it. If another such project were undertaken, it is suggested that the selection of the behavioral scientist, a crucial decision, be a collaborative effort between the project staff and the city manager in which several candidates are interviewed after a careful discussion of the qualities needed in such a person. Among the criteria for the selection of the behavioral scientist, the following are suggested:

1. a clear commitment to urban social-science research and research interest in the specific project topic;

2. experience in working with practitioner systems;

3. experience with research methodology;

4. credibility in both the practitioner and the research systems;

5. availability to devote the needed time to service as a member of the project staff.

Phase Two: The Task-Force Meetings

After all of the Task Forces were constituted, Professor Bard and Ms. Stevenson scheduled a site visit with each group during May and June, 1977. These visits were designed to give the Task-Force members some methodological and theoretical background to help clarify the structure and goals of the project, and to answer questions. Printed materials were prepared for distribution: a brief description of the project, a set of guidelines for the work of the Task Forces, and a short discussion of the application of productivity to local government.

The Task Forces were directed to focus entirely upon the human interaction between those who deliver and those who receive urgent services. Each Task Force was to share and discuss the experiences of the practitioners in the group with the human dimension of emergency interaction. Based on these reports, members were to identify a minimum of five interactive issues or factors in emergency-service delivery which appeared to affect the ultimate outcome of the emergency and which might be worthwhile subjects for research. The goal of the Task Forces was to raise questions, not to seek answers. The final product of the project--a research agenda for further study of the topic--was related in the site visits to the improvement of responsive-service productivity and thus to the advantage of city managers, service deliverers, and service receivers.

The role of the behavioral scientist in the Task Force was to help formulate from the group's discussions questions that could be addressed by the methods of social research. He or she was also asked to prepare a written presentation of each interactive issue including these parts:

1. Problem. A direct and simple statement of the problem identified by the Task Force.

2. Background. The basis of the problem in both practical experience and direct or related prior research, if any.

3. Productivity. A statement of the relationship between the issue raised and questions of productivity, including cost benefits.

4. Methods. Possible methods that could be employed in researching the question.

5. Significance. An overall statement of the significance of the question and the advantages of studying it.

In June, 1977, an orientation meeting was held in New York for the six behavioral scientists. They worked with the project staff to standardize procedures for reporting Task Force results and discussed their experiences in the Task Forces so far. As a result of this meeting, the project staff determined that it would be helpful to modify their mandate to the Task Forces. The staff decided to omit the "methods" section from the final Task Force reports and to make the "productivity" section optional.

The Task Forces concluded their meetings in the fall of 1977. They sent in their individual reports, which were edited by the project staff to achieve a standard format and then distributed to all participants.

The appendix to this report contains the texts of the 26 Researchable Issues that emerged in the final edited version. What follows here is a brief statement of each of the final issues:

1. How can citizens be encouraged to feel more responsible for themselves and their fellows so that they act to help prevent crime?

2. How is the interaction between police officers and citizens affected by the expectations each has of the other?

3. How can police officers and fire fighters be helped to cope with the stresses of their work so that they avoid such consequences as alcoholism, divorce, heart attacks, and so on?

4. Would training in interpersonal relations improve the sensitivity of service providers to the needs of service receivers?

5. How can the public best be educated about the functions and limitations of the various service-delivery systems?

6. How can certain negative effects of responsive-service delivery be avoided, e.g. a police officer ties up traffic while he or she writes a ticket for an offending driver?

7. How do the relative socioeconomic status of the deliverer and the receiver affect the service-delivery process?

8. What level of resources is needed for optimal service delivery?

9. How can service receivers be educated so that they accept alternative crime-reporting procedures that are more productive in terms of use of police officer time?

10. How is service delivery affected when service deliverers do not reside in the city in which they work?

11. How is service quality affected when legal constraints prevent the service deliverer from doing what the service receiver wishes?

12. How and why do citizens develop negative attitudes toward service providers?

13. How does the service deliverer's physical and psychological fatigue affect his or her performance, especially his or her sensitivity to the service receiver?

14. How can the adverse effect of jurisdictional lines on service delivery be minimized?

15. What causes cynicism in police officers and how can these attitudes be changed?

16. What influence does the behavior of the dispatcher or telephone operator have on the citizen who is reporting an emergency?

17. How can citizens be encouraged to understand and accept the fact that a fire fighter must temporarily remove himself or herself from active fire fighting for health and safety reasons?

18. How does job-related stress produce stress in the family of the service deliverer?

19. How can both receivers and deliverers of emergency services deal with their post-emergency feelings?

20. How is the interaction between the service receiver and the service deliverer affected by the stresses of the service deliverer's job?

21. How can citizens be encouraged to report problems quickly, accurately, and to the appropriate service?

22. How can the human concerns of the service receiver be given adequate attention when the responsive-service system only rewards efficiency and other such qualities of the service deliverer's performance?

23. How does the threat that service providers may be subject to liability risk affect their delivery of services?

24. How can the negative effects of having bystanders or onlookers at the scene of an emergency be prevented?

25. Can evaluation criteria for the delivery of responsive services be developed which take into account the contrasting views of deliverer and receiver?

26. How does a police officer's level of general education (not specific job training) affect his or her job performance?

Phase Two: Comments

Communicating the project's underlying concepts to the Task Forces proved to be much more difficult than the project staff had initially anticipated. As a result, Task-Force meetings were not always focused on the central topic of the project. The human interaction between service receiver and service provider was only one of many topics included in the lists of issues sent to the project staff by the Task Forces; less than one-third of the final 26 Researchable Issues dealt exclusively with emergency encounters. The meeting between the behavioral scientists and the project staff also demonstrated that the central concepts were not clear.

In retrospect, this difficulty is believed to be due to the fact that the concepts are hard to grasp and hard to explain. The problem is not so much conceptual as it is cultural: We live in a culture in which the human dimension is both ignored and taken for granted. In the "real world" of work outside the home, most people do not think of concern for human feelings as part of the job.

This is as true of behavioral scientists and responsive-service practitioners as it is of anyone else. Research is thought of as having to do with technical things, not human things. The responsive-service provider's job is often defined in terms of a physical task--put out the fire, catch the criminal, fix the power line--not in terms of any exchange between human beings. Individual firefighters or police officers may be dedicated to public service and sensitive to human needs, but the systems within which they work rarely give the human dimension first priority. This cultural and organizational bias against seeing the human dimension as important may have prevented the participants from being able to focus on it.

There is at least one other reason that the work of the Task Forces was not more clearly centered on the project's theme. During the Task Force meetings, no one from the project staff was present after the first introductory meeting. When the discussion later began to stray from the project topic, it seems likely that no one recognized that fact.

The decision to provide only light-handed guidance for the Task Force meetings was a deliberate one on the part of the staff. It was believed best to provide a task that was broadly defined and to offer staff assistance whenever it was requested rather than to risk over-defining the task or over-supervising the Task Force members. The collaborative model suggests that both researchers and practitioners may require "room to work" with the problems being discussed, and the staff wanted to allow as much room as was needed.

A related problem in the workings of the Task Forces was the confusion that emerged in some of them about leadership roles. The first Task-Force meeting was held in the city manager's office, and apparently some of the Task-Force members expected the city manager to be the group leader. The manager, however, had no more information or expertise than anyone else. This confusion may have prevented the emergence of natural leaders.

A final problem that may be related to difficulty in understanding the project concepts is the relatively low level of productivity which characterized the work of some Task Forces. The rewards to be gained from working on the project were apparently not very clear to some of the participants. Some did not seem to give the project a very high priority.

Phase Three: The Conference

On December 1 and 2, 1977, a working conference was held at the Graduate School of CUNY in New York City. Present were the members of the six Task Forces, the project staff and, on the first day only, invited community guests from systems directly concerned with the delivery of emergency services (consumer advocates; members of police, fire and public utility services in other cities; social scientists; attorneys; staff of government agencies). This new group, whose members are listed at the end of this section, was included to introduce a fresh perspective on the issues at hand. Before the conference, all participants received copies of the 26 Researchable Issues prepared by the Task Forces and project staff. The purpose of the conference was to clarify these issues through consolidation, elaboration, discussion, and further analysis.

The conference consisted of orientation and/or reporting sessions followed by small-group discussion (see agenda, next page). On the first day, the composition of the small groups was mixed: Representatives from a variety of services and disciplines in different cities met to discuss the Task-Force-prepared issue packet. The goals of these meetings were:

1. to increase the generalizability of the research program to be be proposed by fostering discussion on emergency-service delivery among individuals with widely different backgrounds, operating within a variety of urban contexts, and with different perspectives on the emergency encounter;

2. to identify overriding themes among the 26 issues produced by the Task Forces;

3. to identify gaps in the 26 issues;

4. to provide background, where appropriate, which would make issues applicable to a wider range of emergency services and/or locations;

5. to consider the productivity implications of the researchable issues; and

Conference Agenda

Responsive Services

December 1 and 2, 1977

Wednesday - November 30

5:30 - 7:30 p.m.	Reception

Thursday - December 1

9:30 - 10:00 a.m.	Welcome - Opening Remarks
10:00 - 11:00 a.m.	Combined Task-Force Meeting Community Participants Orientation
11:00 - 11:15 a.m.	Coffee
11:15 - 12:30 p.m.	Small Groups
12:30 - 2:00 p.m.	Lunch
2:00 - 3:00 p.m.	Small Groups
3:30 - 4:30 p.m.	Plenary Session
4:30 -	Staff meeting

Friday - December 2

9:00 - 9:30 a.m.	Task Definition
9:30 - 11:00 a.m.	Small Groups
11:00 - 11:15 a.m.	Plenary Session
12:30 - 2:00 p.m.	Lunch
2:00 - 4:30 p.m.	Modifications and elaborations of research issues

6. to begin to assign priorities to the different research topics. Each group included a staff facilitator and a reporter who took notes of the proceedings.

On the second day, Task-Force members were assigned to one of five groups according to their work role: fire/public utilities, city managers, police, union, behavioral scientist. The division was made in this way to see whether the focus of concern would differ according to work role. Groups were given the task of discussing and assigning priorities to the researchable issues. Again, each group was assigned a staff facilitator and a reporter.

During plenary sessions held at the beginning and end of each day, all conference participants met together. These meetings served as periods of orientation, general discussion, and reporting of the activities of small groups. There were also times when participants were encouraged to react to both the Task-Force portion of the project and the conference itself.

Issue Themes

Two major research themes emerged from all six of the small groups on the first day of the conference: stress and communications. The theme of stress (researchable issues #3, 13, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 23) consisted essentially of a concern with the physical and psychological stresses on the provider of emergency aid. There was interest in distinguishing which aspects of the emergency encounter are necessarily stressful and which are modifiable. In addition, there seemed to be a need to know how such stress on the provider affects subsequent service delivery, both directly and through less immediate effects on morale and family life.

The communications theme was equally pervasive (researchable issues #1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 16, 21, 22, 25). Among the groups there was an overwhelming concern with professional image and with the antagonistic feelings that have arisen between providers and receivers of emergency services in many urban communities. Participants observed that the deliverer and the recipient often have incompatible expectations for performance during emergencies; they expressed interest in learning what effect these expectations have on the quality of emergency service. They were also concerned with devising ways to transform an often adversary relationship into one of working together for a common goal.

Major omissions

The conference groups were also consistent in identifying the major omissions in the analysis presented by the Task-Force issues.

1. Focus was often on the <u>deliverer</u> of emergency service rather than on the recipient-deliverer interaction; questions were framed from that perspective alone. In large measure, this fact was believed due to Task-Force composition; no members were specifically chosen as consumer representatives. Although all contributors were reminded that they and their families were <u>receivers</u>

of emergency services in private life and were asked to adopt this point of view at appropriate times during their deliberations, this appeared to be an ineffective means of introducing the receiver's point of view into the process.

2. Almost half of the 26 researchable issues produced by the Task Forces concerned police services only. This overemphasis on the police role in emergency interactions with citizens was attributed to the fact that police most often encounter emergencies with obvious "human" aspects (e.g., disputes). In contrast, fire and public-utilities personnel deal with emergencies that, although they involve people, are primarily physical in nature. Thus, because of the character of the job, police practitioners are more often involved in human interaction and, thus, had already begun their analysis of the human aspects of emergency encounters before this project. During the conference, with attention directed specifically to this deficit, fire and utilities representatives began to apply to their own services the thinking that was articulated from the police perspective.

3. Task Forces were originally charged with suggesting the implications for productivity in the research questions they identified. This proved difficult. Notions of productivity were often implicit in the problems articulated, but they were rarely specified. In general, it was believed that productivity is a matter for a different level of analysis than that undertaken in this project, where the focus was on the interaction between individuals. Apart from the important observation that current notions of productivity tend to ignore the human dimension (and should not), little of a concrete nature was produced. As one Task Force member put it: "This [issue packet] is all about productivity."

4. In line with their overwhelming concerns about communication and the (often conflicting) expectations of service deliverer and receiver, conference participants were surprised at the absence of references to the mass media in the prepared issue packet. It was suggested that media portrayals of emergency encounters affect the expectations not only of the public, but of the service providers as well. Research is believed indicated.

5. A problem of concern to the conference participants, while not limited to the deliverer-receiver encounter, is certainly related to the agenda of the project as a whole: the dissemination and application of existing research data. In discussing the researchable questions prepared by the Task Forces, participants often had vague notions that research already existed on the subject(s). But they weren't sure. However, they believed that, if it existed, people in their positions ought to know about it. Most participants could cite personal experience with research that either had no applicability or, if applicable, was inadequately communicated to others in the field. Such concerns led not to a disillusionment with research per se, but rather with a frustration over the fact that the constructive potential of research is rarely achieved.

Invited Community Guests

Dr. Frank Bonilla
Center for Puerto Rican Studies
CUNY

Professor Haywood Burns
Center for Legal Education
The City College
CUNY

Dr. James Cowhig
Division of Advanced Productivity
Research & Technology
National Science Foundation

Professor Morton Deutsch
Teachers College
Columbia University

Dr. Neil Dumas
Division of Advanced Productivity
Research & Technology
National Science Foundation

Dr. Trudy Festinger
School of Social Work
New York University

Asst. Chief Patrick Fitzsimons
New York City Police Department

Dr. Marc Holzer
Center for Productive Public Management

Ms. Rhoda Karpatkin
Consumers Union

Dr. Hylan Lewis
Emeritus Professor of Sociology
Brooklyn College
CUNY

Dr. Seymour Mann
DC 37, Municipal Union (AFSCME)
New York City

Mr. Bruce McIver
Office of the Mayor
Committee on Productivity
The City of New York

Professor Charlotte Muller
Center for Social Research
CUNY

Dean Thomas Rappetto
John Jay College
CUNY

Professor Charles Rogovin
Temple Law School

Professor Charles T. Ryan
Department of Fire Services
John Jay College
CUNY

Mr. Allen Smith
Brooklyn Union Gas Company

Conference Staff

Professor Lawrence Gould
Ph.D. Program in Clinical Psychology
CUNY

Professor Gary Winkel
Department of Environmental Psychology
The Graduate School and University Center
CUNY

Reporters:
Kathryn Cruci
Claire Francy
Carol Gordon
Sandra Kiersky
Carol Marochin
Barry Snow

Phase Three: Comments

The difficulty experienced by the participants in remaining focused on the project topic continued to be in evidence during the conference. Many groups needed to be reminded by the staff facilitator that the conference was supposed to deal with the human interaction between service provider and service receiver in emergency situations. Possible reasons for this difficulty have been discussed in the previous Comments section.

The work produced by the conference groups varied widely, both in terms of what the groups sought to do and in how well they accomplished their goals. Some groups had periods when their deliberations seemed fragmented, unfocused on any topic. Some groups ended the two-day conference with a sense of dissatisfaction or confusion about the purpose and achievements of the project. Other groups were more productive and more satisfied with their work.

These uneven results seem to be related to the overall difficulty in focusing on the central concepts and to the diffusion of authority that characterized much of the project. The nature of the task at the conference was also apparently insufficiently defined. A concise statement about the expected product was missing, and there were no criteria established for a good performance.

There was some confusion about the role of the community participants who attended the conference on the first day. They were not well integrated into the conference plan, and so it was difficult to take advantage of the new perspective they might have brought to the proceedings. We question the value of including such participants unless a more clear role can be found for them.

RESULTS

The work of the project was predicated on the assumption that researchable problems must come from real-world experience. It was an experiment in which those who practice responsive-service delivery were brought together with those who conduct research to see if their dialogue would produce valuable statements of research problems.

The quality of work generated by the project varied widely. Some of the researchable issues suggested were on or close to target; others were far wide of the mark. The most fruitful issues proposed were those that had to do with the human encounter between service provider and service receiver during an emergency--that is, the ones that came closest to staying on the project topic. Among these is issue #25: Can evaluation criteria for the delivery of responsive services be developed that take into account the sometimes contrasting views of deliverer and receiver? Within the framework of this question it becomes possible to gather empirical information to support or refute the central hypothesis of this project: that the human dimension is an integral part of the delivery of emergency services.

Contrast this issue with another one--issue #21: How do you encourage citizens to report problems quickly, accurately, and to the appropriate service? This question has more to do with citizen education and/or service-system public relations than it does with the interactions between deliverers and receivers in crisis situations. While issue #21 is an interesting and important question it is not very close to the level of analysis intended by the project. Other issues were similarly close to or relatively far from the center of the project's work.

Nevertheless, the results demonstrate clearly that there is validity in the basic assumption. The collaboration of real-world practitioners and researhers does indeed produce a useful dialogue from which research issues of central importance can emerge. We are on the right track.

The project has two final products: a research agenda for further study of the interaction between service receivers and service deliverers in emergencies; and an analysis of the collaborative method employed to articulate these issues. The text of the final research agenda follows here. It is the result of the deliberations of the Task Forces in six cities, the elaboration and refinement achieved during the December conference, and staff work after the conference. A discussion of the significance of the collaboration between responsive-service practitioners and behavioral scientists begins on page 37. It derives from analysis by the Task Forces, the conference participants, and the project staff.

The Research Agenda

The final research agenda focuses on two themes of major interest to project practitioners and researchers in their analysis of the interaction between the providers and receivers of urban emergency services: stress and communications.

Questions about each of the themes can be conceptualized from three different points of view: that of the providers of emergency services; that of the receivers and that of the emergency interaction itself. The questions from the third point of view ask about the interpersonal "rules" that operate during these encounters. Data from all three points of view are necessary to yield a complete account of the experience.

Theme 1: Stress

Emergencies are times of stress for those who require assistance and for those who provide it. This theme asks: How does stress affect the human interaction involved in emergency response and, ultimately, the quality of the service?

Point of view: Interaction

-Are there different "rules" governing interaction between service providers and service receivers during times of emergency and times of more routine interaction?

Service providers often report that citizens don't understand the providers' needs and the pressures on them. Viewing this complaint from a different perspective, one can posit that service deliverers may be insensitive to changing interaction groundrules depending on whether emergency or noemergency conditions obtain. If, for example, the highly directive behavior on the part of the provider that is useful in emergencies is carried over to nonemergencies, citizens may refuse to accept it. The provider who fails to perceive that a difference in context influences the acceptability of behavior and style may feel misunderstood when his or her behavior offends the receiver.

Should there be validity to this hypothesis, it could form the basis for formulating service-delivery strategies which work with (rather than in opposition to) prevailing interaction norms in the different contexts. Modification of deliverer behavior, where appropriate, could make response easier on a human level, thus affecting productivity and satisfaction.

Point of view: Provider

-It is often assumed that working in the delivery of life-and-death services accounts for the disquieting rates of divorce, alcoholism, obesity, and other problems found among those who deliver emergency services. To what extent are these outcomes the result of the emergencies themselves (e.g. observed misery, physical strain, and so on) and to what extent are they the result of modifiable organizational mechanisms designed to permit efficient response to emergency needs (e.g. work schedules)?

To the extent that stress on the provider is excessive and unnecessary, relief should contribute to reduction of personal and marital distress. Since the effect is circular (the work

situation creates stress which adversely affects health and family; deteriorating health and family situations then create stress which adversely affects job performance) improvement at any point in the circle should have beneficial effects on the quality of service.

-What are the psychological effects on providers of delivering emergency services? Does the fact that such events occur repeatedly have an impact? How do psychological repurcussions express themselves in emergency interactions?

While the role and training of police officers, fire fighters, and other service deliverers requires that they handle emergencies and other difficult situations, these situations by their very nature are sometimes beyond control. A building may already be destroyed; a child may have suffocated; a murder may have been committed. In addition, after the emergency has been met, everyone may begin to feel confused, angry, or helpless. Citizens may seek to blame service providers who, in turn, may become angry at the accusations. Often, participants can, with the advantage of experience, see ways that destruction and loss could have been prevented. This can make them bitter and discouraged. Finally, norms and pressures within the service-delivery system often legitimize only very specific and limited reactions to such experiences. When personal response falls outside these limits, stress is increased.

Clearly, emergencies are stressful times; that fact will not change. Yet, stress is often increased when its presence goes unacknowledged and its effects unexplored. Understanding the inevitable pressures which come to bear on emergency service providers and their consequences for interaction will make possible increased self-awareness, increased peer acceptance of a variety of reactions, and, ultimately, less unnecessary stress during emergencies.

-What are the consequences of the physical stresses of emergency service delivery for human interaction?

Physical service delivery often results in fatigue and injury. In addition, emergency-service providers often experience relative inactivity followed by short periods of extreme physical and mental pressure. Around-the-clock tours of duty often place them outside the usual wake-sleep cycle. Prolonged exposure to such physical stress appears to affect physical and mental health.

It seems obvious that physical demands may interfere with productive interaction. To the extent that this occurs, steps can be undertaken to compensate for it.

Point of view: Receiver

-An emergency is a life stress. Can a helper's manner and behavior during the emergency make the experience less stressful?

To the extent that the manner in which the service is delivered has effects which negate the benefits of the assistance, the quality of the help is impaired.

-To what extent can education emphasizing emergency prevention and preparation affect the quality of interaction during those crises which do arise?

It has been the experience of some service providers, e.g. fire departments, that work with citizens to prepare them for possible future emergencies has beneficial effects. Such experiences suggest that "drills" enable emergency interaction to proceed smoothly because citizens, to some extent, are relieved of stress because they have had an opportunity to learn what is expected of them in a non-emergency environment. It would be useful to know those aspects of the role of "emergency victim" which can be transmitted to citizens before actual emergencies arise. Certainly, the role is not one which most citizens get the opportunity to practice at times when the stakes are low. Yet, the value of having such information might be enormous in terms of successful emergency response.

Theme II: Communication

This theme asks: In what ways are the interpersonal difficulties which arise during emergency encounters the consequence of faulty communication? And: How is the quality of service affected?

Point of view: Interaction

-Those who provide emergency service are trained and experienced. For them, the technical management of emergencies is almost routine. For victims, emergencies are extraordinary events with no known and manageable aspects. Do these different perspectives lead the parties to expect different responses from one another than actually occur? If so, what is the consequence of incompatible expectations for the delivery of service?

When citizens report a condition or event to an emergency service they often have implicit or explicit notions about what can and should be done. It is not uncommon for a citizen who has requested service from the police, for example, to ask for action which the officer knows to be defined by law (or its interpretation) as illegal or unconstitutional. Thus, a burglary victim may insist that a police officer search a neighbor's apartment because the victim "knows"

the neighbor is "bad" and probably committed the crime. When the officer, politely and patiently, explains the limitations of the law, the citizen is dissatisfied. Thus, acceptable or even superior performance as judged by superiors within the practitioner system, may be seen as inadequate by citizens. Similarly, emergency service professionals, trained and experienced in crisis response, may--for sound technical reasons--want victims to play a passive role. Such a desire may seem unrealistic to the victim, however; a person may feel impelled to do something to help when his or her home is burning, for example. Thus, a citizen's inability to conform to the service provider's expectations can leave the provider angry and dissatisfied.

The development of expectations for one another which are consistent with an understanding of the technical and psychological realities of emergency response can create a more satisfactory climate, both in terms of the recipient's view of the service and the job satisfaction and productivity of the provider. Research into this area might also stimulate citizen and neighborhood-group input into service delivery systems.

-What is the role of the mass media and popular culture in creating inconsistent or unrealistic response expectations for providers and recipients of emergency services? Can the ill effects be remedied?

If "satisfaction" is a component of productivity and the assessment of the quality of service, then inappropriate dissatisfaction is a cause for concern. Clarification of what is possible versus what is expected can help make standards more realistic both for those who provide the service and for those who receive it.

-How do organizational definitions of "successful" emergency response (which tend to emphasize the concrete and easily measurable) contribute to difficulties in the "human" aspects of the encounter?

Efficiency and productivity are usually measured in terms of the number of complaints or reports received versus some accounting of their disposition. Often, the "human" outcome is lost in the process. Thus, the effectiveness of an animal control program may be judged solely by the number of animals destroyed. Given this definition of goals and method of judging productivity, unintended consequences can result. For example, an elderly man houses a large number of dogs. In response to complaints from neighbors, officers control the hazard by removing the dogs. The officers are unable to attend to the elderly man's needs for companionship and concern for

his animals because of the system of rewards and punishments within their organization.

To the extent that citizens' personal concerns are acknowledged, they will cooperate more fully and be more satisfied with the service. Deliverers of service should profit as well. Combining attention to functional requirements with concern for the psychological well-being of the victims of crisis would represent acknowledgement by the system of the complex nature of the delivery of emergency services.

-What is the effect on the human aspects of the encounter of the fact that those who deliver urban emergency services are often of different racial or cultural background and live in different places than those who receive them?

The usual conceptualization of status discrepancy between citizens and public servants is "attitude." Generally, the attitudes of citizens and service providers are seen as "bad" or "good" and, depending on classification, are targets for improvement. The question asked here is behavioral: Do cultural, racial, or geographical differences make a difference in the way service providers and recipients interact during emergencies? Do "negative" attitudes of one group toward the other have behavioral consequences?

The extent to which differences in background lead to unproductive interaction has implications for policy. It may be the case that--to the extent possible--differences between providers and recipients of emergency services should be minimized to improve the human quality of emergency interactions. It might be judged that different forms of instruction or supervision of service deliverers can limit the expression of inappropriate behaviors due to cultural differences.

Point of view: Provider

-Citizens often don't know of or don't respond to the needs of providers in accomplishing effective emergency response. How can citizens be encouraged to acknowledge these needs and to cooperate with service deliverers?

Citizens may be slow to request emergency services; they may not want to call or they may misjudge the severity of the problem. Sometimes, for example, a person waits too long when a cooking fire gets out of control or is reluctant to report pain until it has become quite severe. When an emergency escalates, the citizen may panic and report incoherently or inaccurately. He or she may call the wrong service, the wrong district, or simply may not

know what to do. On the other hand, people may refuse to accept routine processing of nonemergencies such as stolen bicycles. Many citizens resist the adaptations that emergency services have made in response to fiscal limitations.

At emergency scenes, crowds of bystanders often gather, sometimes to observe, sometimes to support, and sometimes --intentionally or unintentionally--to interfere with the efficient delivery of service. From their point of view, they, the providers, are the experts and must be relied upon to give structure and direction to assistance efforts.

"Lack of citizen cooperation" is a serious frustration for providers of emergency service. They cannot understand why, since they are there to help, they don't get more of the assistance they need from citizens. Understanding how the communication of these needs from service-provider to citizen is being interfered with would lay important foundations for change.

Point of view: Receiver

-Deliverers of emergency services are seen as responding to bureaucratic dictates of organizations and/or as unconcerned with the welfare of the person in trouble. How can responsive services be encouraged to acknowledge the human complexity of emergency encounters? To be responsive to the felt needs of citizens?

To a great extent, the model projected by the training and socialization of those who enter responsive services is of the detached "professional." This model satisfies many internal and external needs of the organization and in many ways results in excellent technical service. However, the model usually implies a distancing of the self, a detachment from the people as human beings. This is a protective measure. It may also, unfortunately, lead the receiver of the service to feel belittled or unimportant. In the end, the encounter is strained or counterproductive.

Service organizations do not have to ignore the psychological needs of those they help or to concentrate exclusively on physical matters; attention to one does not preclude attention to the other. In fact, it might be argued that the quality of service, and thus productivity, would be improved should such factors be acknowledged.

The Collaborative Process

At a number of junctures during the course of the project, practitioners, social scientists, and staff turned their attention to the process by which the

topic of emergency-service delivery was being addressed. There was an overriding positive reaction by Task-Force members to the collaborative endeavor. In general, behavioral scientists and practitioners, who had approached the task with some apprehension, some skepticism, and some hope, were pleasantly surprised. They enjoyed the conversation. More than that, though, both researchers and practitioners gained new understandings of the others' problems and skills. For example, one practitioner related how, in his group, problems which service providers identified often contained implied "solutions." The researcher pointed out the bias and convinced the group that a value-neutral approach to inquiry was likely to be more fruitful. In addition, providers of different services within cities began, through their focused discussions, to get a broader perspective of emergency-service delivery and a new sense of what they had in common.

Of course there were problems. Some have been reported earlier: inadequate supervision of Task Forces, the trade-off between selection of personnel and the comfort of participants, the lack of incentive for commitment to the task. Others came to light during group discussion of the Task-Force process. A very serious omission was the lack of Task-Force members exclusively concerned with introducing the point of view of the consumer of emergency services.

Equally lacking, although somewhat less obvious to those involved, was the perspective of line-level personnel, those who actually interact with citizens during crises. Thus, the analysis and discussion of emergency encounters in this project was undertaken by people who are not participants. It remains a significant question whether a group composed of service receivers and line-level practitioners would produce the same analysis and research agenda. One wonders whether "image" and "perceptions," major themes of the issue packet and the conference, are equally salient to those who actually take part in emergency encounters. There is some evidence that they are not.

On the second day of the conference, Task-Force members met in small groups according to work role. The only group which <u>did not</u> make "image" a priority in discussion was that of the union representatives. Their talk was focused more on the dynamics of actual emergency encounters themselves. It can be hypothesized that the concerns of union participants, some of whom were working fire and police officers, were closer to those of line-level providers and receivers of emergency service than those of high-level administrators. Future work--involving actual actors in the emergency encounter as well as direct observation--is an obvious next step.

Another problem may also be related to group composition. Project participants had difficulty focusing on the emergency <u>interaction</u> as the unit of analysis. Less than one-third of the 26 researchable issues produced by the Task Forces dealt specifically with these encounters. Similarly, staff facilitators of conference small-group discussions reported the recurrent need to bring discussions back from concern with general organizational function to focus on the interaction between service providers and receivers during emergencies.

This difficulty has been touched upon at several points in earlier sections of this report, where its cultural and organizational roots have been discussed. An additional explanation can be found in the fact that most of the practitioner representatives operate on levels within their service-delivery systems that are far removed from individual emergency interactions. In effect, their frame of reference is organizational management, not the dynamics of emergency service delivery. Again, reference to the discussion of union representatives on the second day of the conference (as compared with that of the other work groups) supports the latter interpretation. They seemed more comfortable focusing on the interaction between individual providers and receivers of emergency services.

Similarly, many of the behavioral scientists were from fields uninvolved in day-to-day human interaction. Rather than leading the practitioners to focus on individual encounters, they may well have explored topics more in keeping with their own backgrounds and training. Again, we must conclude that further work by those with more appropriate positions and backgrounds is indicated.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This project has generated a great deal of useful information. What was learned in this first effort has implications for responsive-service systems, for social-science research, and for the quality of urban life. The project began the exploration of new territory, preparing the way for continued work in several areas.

One important finding has to do with what we have called "the human dimension" in responsive-service delivery during urban emergencies. The work of the Task Forces and the Conference confirmed our hypothesis that the human interaction between service deliverer and service receiver is important. Despite the fact that it was difficult for project participants to remain focused on this aspect, everyone agreed that the unit of analysis was of great potential significance. Many things are yet to be learned about the ways in which the different kinds of human interaction that can take place during emergencies affect the quality of urban life. We, therefore, recommend that others try to build knowledge about the human interaction in responsive-service delivery during urban emergencies.

Our second group of recommendations have to do with the actual conduct of the project reported here. We employed a method that included the selection of cities and Task Forces, meetings of the Task Forces, and a conference. The body of this report explains the procedures used in detail and also offers close analysis of what was dysfunctional in those procedures. Here we will summarize the changes we would recommend for someone who planned to use a similar method. We, then, recommend certain changes in the conduct of future projects similar to this one.

1. The staff had too laissez-faire a role in the conduct of the project at several crucial points. In future projects, we recommend that the selection of all participants, especially the behavioral scientist, be a joint venture shared by the city manager and project staff. We also recommend that the staff be more actively involved in Task Force meetings so that discussions are kept on the most productive ground.

2. There were areas in which the staff did too much, as well. We recommend that the writing and editing of research issues and of the final project report be a joint task of the staff and Task Force participants since much of the conceptual synthesis that occurred was the result of these activities.

3. In the selection of personnel, we recommend that careful consideration be given to the proposed individuals' background, perspective, and experience in relation to the project topic. "Practitioner systems" or "behavioral scientist," for example, are much too broad to be used as categories for personnel selection; one must ask: What kind of practitioner systems? What roles within that system need representation? What sort of background should the behavioral scientist have? And so on.

4. We recommend that care and planning be given to structuring incentives for collaboration which take into account the reward structures of both the research and practitioner systems. The enthusiasm of the project staff alone is not usually sufficient incentive for other participants; they must be able to see what the project will do for them.

5. The project described in this report focused on an aspect of emergency service delivery that was both unfamiliar and difficult to grasp: the fact that contemporary American society has overlooked and undervalued the human dimension in the provision of emergency services. Some of the difficulties encountered during the project can be traced to insufficient understanding of that concept on the part of both project staff and participants. We recommend that future projects focusing on this aspect or one of similar unfamiliarity provide for a longer period of orientation and practice with the project concept at the onset of the work.

6. The Task Forces and the Conference groups were charged in this project with the "analysis, consideration, and discussion" of the human dimension in emergency service delivery. This proved to be an insufficiently defined task. We recommend that there be more specific task definition in future projects, with clear statements of the expected product and of the process by which it is to be achieved so that the groups will seek to do the same thing and know when they have accomplished their goal.

The single most important result of the project was not foreseen when the work was first proposed. Its significance became apparent only as the work progressed; indeed, some of the participants became fully aware of its impact only after the project was over. We refer to the collaborative method, an approach whereby practitioners and researchers join together to work as coaccountable partners in the research task.

The value of this researcher-practitioner collaboration cannot be overstated. Addressing the problems of society has become one of the functions of applied social science, and procedures must be developed which accomodate the practical "givens" of research outside the laboratory while conforming to the standards of scientific inquiry. Real-world systems have significant problems whose solution might be sought through research, but most existing research products are not applicable or cannot be transferred to the systems needing them. If researchers and practitioners collaborate in research from its inception, the needs of both groups can be met.

The collaborative methods can be broadly applied to all sorts of systems and all sorts of problems. The interaction between researcher and practitioner might be appropriately applied to programs with a problem-solving focus, programs with a training focus, and others. We, therefore, <u>recommend that the collaboration between practitioners and researchers be more fully explored in a variety of frameworks</u>.

UTILIZATION

1. In August, 1977 the Principal Investigator, the Project Director, the representative of ICMA and the NSF Program Manager participated in a symposium at the meeting of the American Psychological Association held in San Francisco, California. There, they described the project to a national audience of psychologists. Response was made to the inquiries which followed from the presentation and copies of the final report will be distributed as they become available.

2. Representatives of the ICMA reported on the project at a conference on "The Role of Human Behavior in Life Safety" held during the National Fire Protection Conference in July, 1978. This conference concentrated on new developments as well as other aspects of life safety from human behavior to building design, code enforcement, automatic detection and suppression systems, and rescue. The audience was composed of fire service personnel, local government officials, national government officials, and behavioral scientists.

3. A paper is in preparation for inclusion in a planned special volume to be published by the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (The Journal of Social Issues) on the subject of productivity in the public sector. The paper will report on the project and its implications.

4. Report of the project is planned in such user-directed publications as Public Management and Target (published by ICMA).

5. Executive summaries of the report will be distributed to various user groups, including: The International Association of Chiefs of Police, the International City Management Association, and the National Fire Protection Association. Announcement of the summary's availability will be made in the following publications: the journal of the Center for Productive Public Management, John Jay College, CUNY; the Newsletter of the Division of Community Psychology, American Psychological Association.

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APPENDIX:

TWENTY-SIX RESEARCH ISSUES

RESEARCHABLE ISSUE
#1

PROBLEM

In the face of declining services, how do you encourage citizens to feel more responsible for themselves and others in order to help prevent crime and hence maintain quality service?

BACKGROUND

Cost and taxation trends suggest that, for the foreseeable future, police and fire units will be funded at, or below, current levels. Improving, or even maintaining the quality of services will require new approaches. One method is to encourage citizens to help themselves. Research in this area is especially important since it appears that citizen involvement and cooperation with deliverers of service appears to have decreased in recent years. In part, increased professionalization of police and fire work may have created unneeded barriers between deliverers and recipients of services and fostered the attitude "let them take care of it -- that's why we pay them."

SIGNIFICANCE

In light of the fact that continued increases in public allocation of funds to fire and police work is unlikely, it is necessary to overcome citizen attitudes of "powerlessness" and "indifference," and begin to examine ways to involve citizens in preventing crisis situations calling for emergency delivery of services. If ways can be found to involve citizens, we would expect to see greater deliverer/recipient interaction with a possibly resultant decrease in complaints and an increase in citizen initiated request for crime and fire prevention seminars, surveys in the home, and checks of potential crimes.

RESEARCHABLE ISSUE
#2

PROBLEM

How people treat one another is often a function of expectations. How do police officers see themselves and their jobs? What do citizens expect from police officers? How do these views ("role conceptions") affect the interactions between police and citizens?

BACKGROUND

How a police officer views his or her role influences interactions with citizens and, thus, job performance. Research on officers' impressions of their responsibilities has begun to clarify the relationship between role conceptions and behavior. Similar notions about what a police officer should do are often associated with similar outcomes. For example, if an officer views him/herself as a "protector" he or she is likely to patrol the streets, checking out dangerous neighborhoods or known trouble spots. When this officer interacts with citizens, particularly those of low-income or minority backgrounds, he or she may appear overly suspicious or hostile. Few accepted definitions of the police role lead regularly to relaxed, friendly encounters between officers and citizens. On the other hand, it is not at all clear what expectations the public holds for police officers. In the same way that police expectations for themselves influence transactions with the public, so will citizen expectations for police.

SIGNIFICANCE

The development of positive, realistic expectations for both police and citizens, can create a more satisfactory climate. The availability of an increased number of police role definitions could enable emergency response which is suited to the qualities of the situation and people involved, rather than to narrow senses of how police officers should behave.

PROBLEM

How do you help police officers and fire fighters to cope with their stressful life-style and avoid such physical and psychological consequences of stress as heart attacks, obesity, alcoholism, marital discord, divorce, etc?

BACKGROUND

While the role and training of police officers and fire fighters requires that they handle emergencies and control difficult situations, emergencies by their very nature may be beyond control (e.g. a building is already destroyed, a child has suffocated, a murder has already occurred). Public servants must live with the horror of such events and the knowledge that they or others, with proper prevention, might have avoided the emergency altogether. Added to this stress, the schedule of police officers and fire fighters seems to foster a "jet lag" existence. Police officers and fire fighters experience relative inactivity followed by short periods of extreme physical and mental pressure during emergencies. Around the clock tours of duty often place them outside the usual wake-sleep cycle. Such prolonged exposure to stress seems to result in impaired physical and mental health.

SIGNIFICANCE

Improving the mental and physical health of police officers and fire fighters might reduce the incidence of heart attacks, obesity, service related disabilities, and marital discord. In turn, reductions of this sort would reduce staff turnover and training costs, and reduce indirect costs related to disabilities.

RESEARCHABLE ISSUE
#4

PROBLEM

Can service providers be made aware of how their manner affects their dealings with citizens? Does such training in interpersonal dynamics improve the service provider-recipient interaction?

BACKGROUND

Sometimes, in the delivery of service, police or fire officers use a cold officious manner. They may see themselves as authorities, and play that role by remaining aloof and detached. As a result, recipients of the service may feel belittled or unimportant. In the end, the encounter is strained or counter-productive.

SIGNIFICANCE

Various training programs in interpersonal relations claim to make people more aware of how their manner, attitudes or the roles they play can affect their interactions with others. According to this model, the increased self-awareness leads to appropriate modification of behavior and increased satisfaction with and productiveness of encounters. If the claims are true, such programs, when added to police and fire training programs, could result in increased job satisfaction, higher productivity and greater public regard for the service provider.

PROBLEM

It is possible that interactions between service deliverers and recipients are influenced by the public's understanding of the functions and limitations of the service. What do people know about service-delivery systems? What do they need to know? What are the best ways to educate the public?

BACKGROUND

Good communication is necessary for many reasons. For one, it informs the public of the services available. For another, if they know why certain actions are being taken, citizens are often more cooperative. For example, residents often feel that fire fighters destroy property out of malice. In fact, however, when a fire breaks out in a cellar, fire fighters cut a hole in the roof of the house to draw the smoke up and prevent fires from spreading. When fire fighters take the time to make the connection between the fire in the cellar and the hole in the roof they gain a good deal in public image.

SIGNIFICANCE

Better information may lead to more citizen cooperation and respect for service providers. In return, officers may feel better about their jobs, and productivity will increase.

RESEARCHABLE ISSUE
#6

PROBLEM

Activities of public employees during a crisis may inadvertently cause another crisis. The process of solving a micro-crisis may give rise to a macro-crisis of greater proportions and of a different nature. Where should the responsibility of the public employee be focused? Is there a conflict between the human aspects of the micro-crisis and the economic aspect of the macro-crisis?

BACKGROUND

Police administrators are quite often asked why a police officer has to write a ticket on a major traffic artery during the rush hour, thus blocking one lane of the street; or why officers have to remain on a freeway with the emergency lights flashing while an accident is investigated when the cars involved in the accident are obviously driveable. These questions result from the stresses or tensions felt by other drivers who must creep along because each driver slows down to "see what's going on" and from the occasional additional accidents which occur because of the slowdown of traffic or diverted attention in "seeing what's going on."

Largely unexplored in productivity is the notion that in providing service, there may be negative effects. Such "negative effects" might be: 1) precipitation of additional service delivery demands (e.g., crowd control), 2) inconvenience of persons not directly involved, and 3) the need to commit additional resources as a result of a chain effect occasioned by response to a service need. If avoidance of negative effects were to become more of a factor in productivity measurement, procedural changes and perhaps changes in ordinances and laws could structure the service response in ways calculated to avoid negative effects.

#6 (continued)

SIGNIFICANCE

The essence of the problem herein suggested is that service deliverers may suffer from a situation-focused "myopia." When public or private inconvenience or embarrassment is raised as an issue, the public employee's response may be, "Well, I was just doing my job." Research in this area may have the effect of broadening the cognitive perspective of the service deliverer in such a way that his definition of quality of service would include the avoidance of negative effects. Research might provide clearer definition of the point in the service response where "the greatest good for the greatest number" should be the guiding principle in delivery of service.

RESEARCHABLE ISSUE
#7

PROBLEM

How does the relative cultural status of the deliverer and the receiver of service affect the service delivery process?

BACKGROUND

The delivery of emergency services involves more than a passive transaction between deliverer and recipient of service. The relative cultural status of deliverer and recipient may affect their attitudes towards each other and ultimately influence their behavior in emergency situations. If the deliverer of service is perceived as being a representative of the "system" that the receiver believes has power and authority over him, the receiver may interfere with the service provider and may be more likely to judge the efforts of the providers as inadequate and unsatisfactory. If the service provider, on the other hand, has little understanding of the receiver's culture and beliefs, and has negative attitudes toward the culture of the community, he/she may have greater hesitancy about providing such service. This hesitancy may be heightened when the deliverer perceives the community's hostility and is concerned about community complaints and community obstruction of service.

SIGNIFICANCE

There is often a gap in cultural status between deliverer and recipient of service. These cultural differences may lead to negative attitudes which interfere with the delivery of service.

RESEARCHABLE ISSUE
#8

PROBLEM

What level of resources is needed for optimal emergency service delivery?

BACKGROUND

More and more, cities are facing decreasing revenues and, thus, cutbacks in the budgets of emergency services. It is typically assumed that cutbacks mean disaster. Yet, it is possible that less financial support for emergency services will lead to different interaction patterns between service deliverers and receivers, leading to better quality service. For example, when sanitation departments are forced to reduce pickups, citizens may, at first, feel angry. Ultimately, however, they may form their own "Cleanup Squads," using sanitation equipment, provided by the city, and supplying their own "(wo)man power." In like fashion, decreased support in other emergency services may encourage more efficient use of resources and foster an attitude of cooperation, responsibility and active participation by citizens. Research is needed to determine the precise dimensions of the relationship between the amount of available resources and the quality and quantity of service delivered.

SIGNIFICANCE

In light of declining funds, it is often automatically assumed that the quality of service delivery will suffer. This may not be the case in all jurisdictions and for all services.

RESEARCHABLE ISSUE
#9

PROBLEM

How do you educate the public to accept alternative procedures of reporting crimes in order to reduce the amount of time police officers spend on public contacts which involve processing low payoff/unsolvable crimes?

BACKGROUND

Officers often contact citizens in person after crimes that typically cannot be solved. For example, stolen bicycles are almost never recovered. Information gathered by visiting the site of the crime does not seem to increase the likelihood of solution. Since this is a low payoff-activity the time would seem to be better spent in more productive ways: responding to emergencies or in programs for the education of the public. Were it not for apparent public resistance, necessary information could be collected on the telephone.

SIGNIFICANCE

Use of the telephone contacts versus personal, face-to-face contacts would be a more efficient use of officers' time. Time saved could be allocated to other emergency service and/or the education of the public towards the prevention of crime.

PROBLEM

Our city may be in a unique position among American cities regarding recipient-deliverer residence patterns. The receivers of service live in our town and commute to jobs in a large nearby city. The police and fire fighters, who cannot afford to reside in the area, often have to commute more than an hour to work. The question then, is how does this transcience affect the interaction between the deliverer and receiver of service, and, ultimately, the quality of service performed.

BACKGROUND

Due to the large number of people coming into the city in the morning and leaving in the evening, problems with traffic are a daily occurrence. The police officer who directs traffic or issues tickets is seen by commuters as a barrier to getting home. Citizens have few chances to interact with the officers on a more personal "off duty" basis. To the police, our town is where they work--not where they live. They do not feel "at home" or comfortable there. With an hour's commute ahead of them, and little personal commitment, officers are reluctant to work over-time.

SIGNIFICANCE

Many of our city's service deliverers may feel little personal commitment to protect the city. Finding ways to involve the deliverer of service in the life of the community may lead to improved services.

RESEARCHABLE ISSUE
#11

PROBLEM

Do legal constraints governing the delivery of responsive services adversely affect service effectiveness when high effectiveness is defined as an optimal matching of quantity or quality of service with the need (demand) for it?

BACKGROUND

It is not uncommon for a citizen who has requested service from the police to ask and sometimes demand that the officer take action which the officer knows to be defined by law (or its interpretation) as illegal or unconstitutional. Quite often little understanding is displayed by the citizen when the officer explains that he cannot take such action. Sometimes the officer's inclinations (how he feels the situation should be handled) conflict with his role as defined within the legal constraints. Therefore, both the deliverer and recipient in the service situation may exit the interaction frustrated and under stress.

Concerns related to this problem include: 1) What determines the perceived needs of service recipients? 2) How does the service which can be legally provided compare with the service desired by the recipient? 3) Does a knowledge of the legal constraints affect whether service recipients request a responsive service? 4) How do service recipients react to being told that what they ask cannot be legally accomplished? What effects does this have on the service deliverer? 5) Do legal restraints have an effect on the incidence of unlawful behavior? 6) Is there a cultural lag between the motivations of the deliverers and recipients of services and the body of law, as currently interpreted?

#11 (continued)

SIGNIFICANCE

If legal constraints have negative behavioral effects on the deliverer and/or recipient of responsive services, such effects should be documented. To quote from the Common Law by Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., "The first requirement of a sound body of law is, that it should correspond with the actual feelings and demands of the community, whether right or wrong." Perhaps there is an important need to determine if we have a "sound body of law" as defined by Holmes.

PROBLEM

When citizens hold negative attitudes toward police and fire officers, there may be serious disruption in the delivery of emergency services. How and why do negative attitudes develop toward service providers? Do any socioeconomic factors affect or covary with negative attitudes? How can such attitudes be improved?

BACKGROUND

Since citizens must bring emergencies to the attention of police and fire services, and then cooperate with the officers in investigations of related matters, negative attitudes by citizens can seriously interfere with the effectiveness and productivity of such services. Some fire and police agencies have begun to make an effort to be viewed as part of, rather than apart from, their communities. To the extent possible, they invite and encourage citizen participation in: 1) discussions of community conditions and problems, 2) evaluations of the agency's delivery of service and 3) policy making.

SIGNIFICANCE

Improvement in citizens' attitudes toward police and fire agencies should increase cooperation, and, therefore, the ease and effectiveness with which services are delivered. If it is possible to identify why a community develops or has negative attitudes toward police or fire service providers, it should be possible to institute procedures that would improve those attitudes. The identification of relevant socioeconomic factors can help to focus such efforts.

PROBLEM

The performance of responsive services during prolonged crises of at the end of a work day introduces an element of fatigue. Does the deliverer's physiological and psychological fatigue affect his or her performance and sensitivity to the position of the recipient? In what ways? To what extent?

BACKGROUND

It is generally acknowledged that productivity is inversely affected by fatigue. Moreover, the quality of the deliverer-recipient interaction may change. For example, at the end of the day, a Customer Representative of a utility company may be less complete in her response to an irate customer's complaints about the size of her bill. Given insufficient information, the customer may fail to pay the bill immediately and her service can be terminated. If the persons charged with service delivery are less fatigued, such incidents might be avoided.

SIGNIFICANCE

To the extent that the effects of fatigue are measurable and preventable, steps taken in response will improve the quality of service delivered.

RESEARCHABLE ISSUE
#14

PROBLEM

Performance of responsive services is frequently affected by the existence of jurisdictional lines which create obstacles for the service delivery. These may be municipal, county or bi-state boundaries. Would it be possible to minimize the effect of the jurisdictional lines on the performance of responsive service?

BACKGROUND

It is fairly common to hear of complaints of inadequate or slow response from the "proper" agency while a neighboring jurisdiction's equipment or personnel were near at hand. Cities have noted improvement in the quality, quantity and speed of service when steps are taken such as consolidation of several jurisdictions' request and dispatch services ("911") or instituting a system whereby the closest unit responds, regardless of jurisdictional boundaries. Consider, for example, what can happen when a vehicular accident occurs along the intersecting borders of several municipalities. The police from the cities involved are called. Upon arrival, the officers of the separate jurisdictions are themselves not sure of the location of the boundary lines. While the officers consult with their separate supervisors the persons involved in the accident wait to receive investigative service and learn if there will be enforcement action. What is the recipient's view of the service effectiveness of the deliverer's activities?

SIGNIFICANCE

Improved understanding of the impact that jurisdictional lines have on the delivery of service can work to the advantage of the system. With minimal increase in cost substantial gains can be made in productivity and effectiveness.

RESEARCHABLE ISSUE
#15

PROBLEM

To what extent is the cynicism of police officers affected by interactions with citizens, peer pressure and the organizational environment? Can such factors be changed to improve officers' attitudes toward service recipients?

BACKGROUND

During the first year or two, many police officers harden: they become cynical, unsympathetic, less humane. Others, hired at the same time and performing the same duties, do not. It is assumed that an officer's cynicism causes his or her dealings with citizens to deteriorate, thus reducing productivity and citizen satisfaction.

The suggestion that police agencies hire people who are predisposed to cynicism, authoritarianism and the like is seductive. However, it seems far more likely that the causes of police cynicism are rooted in the work itself, the norms and values of the police subculture and the organizational structure. The extent to which environmental factors affect officers' attitudes needs clarification. Likewise, the reasons why some officers become cynical and some do not is unclear. Are there institutional rewards that can facilitate or inhibit the hardening process? Finally, what are the specific consequences of cynicism for officer-citizen interactions?

SIGNIFICANCE

The police acculturation process is a particularly tenacious one. The most successful efforts to change it have met with limited success. Research on this and related topics may lead to increased understanding of the by-products of police socialization and organization. Such knowledge may lead to improvements in the selection of police officers or to the development of programs designed to improve officers' attitudes toward service recipients.

RESEARCHABLE ISSUE
#16

PROBLEM

The first contact between the service provider and recipient is when the emergency is reported. What influence does the interaction between the caller and the dispatcher or operator have on the delivery of the service? What is the effect on the citizen of a long delay in reporting the emergency?

BACKGROUND

A citizen may call the police and be put on "hold" for up to five or ten minutes. What impression is formed about police management and efficiency? Does the wait adversely affect the information eventually provided the dispatcher? How does the negative experience affect citizens' willingness to cooperate with the responding officer? Clearly, the initial reporting experience can set the tone for service-provider-recipient interactions for the duration of the emergency.

SIGNIFICANCE

The initial interaction between service-deliverer and recipient can 1) affect the quality of the subsequent interactions and 2) yield or fail to yield information critical to how the agency will respond to the emergency. If delay in response to a caller has undesirable consequences, measures can be taken to shorten the response time and/or to reduce the volume of calls to the dispatcher.

RESEARCHABLE ISSUE
#17

PROBLEM

How can one clarify, in physiological and psychosocial terms, the circumstances under which a fire fighter should temporarily remove him/herself from active fire fighting for health safety reasons? How can citizens be encouraged to accept this procedure?

BACKGROUND

Fire departments emphasize the importance of temporarily relieving fire fighters from direct fire fighting activities in order to protect them against excessive inhalation of smoke and to avoid exhaustion. However, they note that property owners and spectators perceive of this period of inactivity as gross inefficiency and negligence and can become actively antagonistic as a consequence. Although the removal procedure is considered essential to maintaining fire fighting efficiency, there are no data upon which fire fighters base decisions to withdraw and re-enter.

SIGNIFICANCE

Data defining when fire fighters should be withdrawn and when they should return to activity would increase efficiency. Development of an educational and/or public relations program covering this problem area would be helpful toward improving the public's image of the fire department.

RESEARCHABLE ISSUE
#18

PROBLEM

To what degree does job stress produce family stress that in turn may influence job performance. To what extent do organizational factors, such as work hours, time, attitudes of friends and the general public, peer requirements, and occupational stress, etc. or a combination of all these elements, increase or decrease family stress among service workers?

BACKGROUND

The current literature abounds with references as to how crises may be met by professional and non-professionals in local communities. A vast array of techniques for meeting crisis situations are described, as is the impact of these interventions on the recipient of service. However, little is described of the impact on the providers of services and their families. It is the service workers, themselves, who establish the importance of this issue. Service workers describe how stresses that they encounter on the job influence their family life. They indicate that reactions to crisis events or the anticipation of these events, particularly in ambiguous situations and job dissatisfactions are brought home and influence family relationships. The reactions to stress are manifested in absenteeism, injury, sickness, alcoholism, despondency, marital discord and divorce. A basic problem recognized by both staff and administration is how to reduce the effects of job-induced stress. A second question is how to prevent these stresses from resulting in marital problems which in turn may have a negative influence on job performance.

SIGNIFICANCE

More specific understanding of how job related stress impacts upon family life and how family problems impact on job performance would provide information that may be valuable in helping reduce work-family pressures experienced by service workers.

RESEARCHABLE ISSUE
#19

PROBLEM

When an emergency occurs it affects the helper as well as the victim. What can be done after an emergency to help recipients and deliverers of service cope with their post-emergency reactions?

BACKGROUND

After an emergency has been met, both citizens and officers may feel angry, confused or helpless. Citizens may seek to blame the police or fire officers; the officers may be angry at the accusations. Both are in situations over which they have very little control and they may well see ways that the emergency could have been prevented entirely. For instance, while a fire burns, everyone is caught up in the tasks of containing and controlling it. During cleanup, however, citizens may accuse fire fighters of acting irresponsibly. At the same time, fire fighters often realize that the fire was preventable and, as a result, feel rage or bitterness toward the "irresponsibility" of a citizen such as the parent of an injured child.

SIGNIFICANCE

1. The post-emergency feelings of both recipient and deliverer might have negative consequences for each. By helping the recipient to relieve his/her post-emergency feelings, debilitating post-disaster effects might be mitigated.
2. At the same time post-emergency recipient deliverer interaction might serve an educational purpose while reducing recipient/deliverer post-emergency hostility.

RESEARCHABLE ISSUE
#20

PROBLEM

Providers of emergency services are uniquely subject to a variety of stresses due to the kind of work they do and the family tensions that result. Is the service provider-recipient interaction adversely affected by such stresses? If so, what measures can be taken to alleviate them?

BACKGROUND

Police officers in particular are subjected to extreme stresses on the job. Moreover, peer pressures and norms may increase the personal stress by legitimizing only certain kinds of reactions. That providers of emergency services are subject to extreme stress is evidenced by the high rates of family conflict and alcohol misuse in these populations. It is also demonstrated by the fact that many departments offer counseling to officers and their families.

SIGNIFICANCE

Research on this topic would seem valuable in order to identify the following:

1) What aspects of police work are most stressful to the officer and his family? Can they be modified to reduce the toll on the officer?
2) How does stress affect the police officer's work, particularly his interactions with the public? Is productivity reduced?
3) Is psychological counseling effective in alleviating the stresses affecting the officer and his family? Are there other programs that may be as or more effective in aiding the police officer in times of personal/family need?

RESEARCHABLE ISSUE
#21

PROBLEM

How do you encourage citizens to report problems quickly, accurately, and to the appropriate service? What conditions facilitate the dispatcher-recipient interaction so that the appropriate response can be quickly dispatched?

BACKGROUND

Citizens may be slow to request services. They may not want to call on police or fire services. They may misjudge the severity of the problem. Sometimes, for example, a person waits too long when a cooking fire gets out of control or is reluctant to report pain until it has become quite severe. When an emergency escalates, the citizen may panic and report incoherently or inaccurately. He or she may call the wrong service, the wrong district, or simply may not know what to do. The deliverer, on the other hand, may misjudge the situation or diagnose it poorly because he/she may be overloaded with calls. Sometimes the dispatcher may not have requested relevant information. Sometimes they are unaware of factors affecting the officer(s) who must deliver the services (e.g., interference in transmission).

SIGNIFICANCE

More rapid and informed requests from receivers of services and more accurate diagnosis and dispatching of responders should produce shorter response times, more satisfactory matching of services to needs, and better quality of services as judged by both deliverers and receivers of emergency services.

RESEARCHABLE ISSUE
#22

PROBLEM

Effective and productive amelioration of crisis situations are central concerns for deliverers of responsive services. To what extent can this attention to functional matters be combined with responsiveness to personal, human concerns of the service recipient?

BACKGROUND

Efficiency and productivity are usually measured in terms of the number of complaints or reports received versus some accounting of their disposition. Often, the "human" outcome is lost in the process. Thus, the effectiveness of an animal control program may be judged solely by the number of animals destroyed. Given this definition of goals and method of judging productivity, unintended consequences can result. For example, an elderly man houses a large number of dogs. In response to complaints from neighbors, officers control the hazard by removing the dogs, unable to attend to the elderly man's needs for companionship and concern for his animals. As the example indicates, the methods and rewards for current service delivery systems favor the functional response. In so doing, they may discourage attention to personal, human concerns of citizens.

SIGNIFICANCE

To the extent that citizens' personal concerns are acknowledged, they will be more satisfied with the service they are given. Deliverers of service should profit as well. Combining attention to functional requirements with concern for the psychological well-being of the victims of crisis would represent acknowledgement by the system of the complex nature of the delivery of emergency services.

RESEARCHABLE ISSUE
#23

PROBLEM

How does the threat that service providers may be subject to liability risk as a result of their work affect the delivery of service?

BACKGROUND

Service providers in emergency situations are subject to difficult and dangerous tasks which may result in injury to deliverer or recipient. Should the person or the property of the recipient be damaged, or the recipient believe that the situation was mismanaged, the deliverer may be held liable.

SIGNIFICANCE

If as a result of their activities in a crisis situation, service providers perceive that they are at risk of being subjected to disciplinary actions or claims for damages, they may be less willing to render such services and the quality and quantity of services could be impaired.

RESEARCHABLE ISSUE
#24

PROBLEM

Often emergency situations draw large groups of people to the scene of the occurrance. How do you mitigate against the possible negative effects of bystanders or onlookers at the scene of an emergency?

BACKGROUND

Groups of people usually gather at the scene of an emergency and often attempt to "assist" the service deliverer. Sometimes their efforts provide physical and psychological support for service providers. More often, however, large groups of onlookers may interfere with the delivery of service; they may occupy space needed by the service provider or even heckle or actively interfere with the activities of the service provider.

SIGNIFICANCE

While the aid of bystanders at the scene of emergencies may on some occasions be solicited by and beneficial to the goals of service providers, with the sophistication of modern crisis intervention systems, this is rarely the case. Much more often, the presence of onlookers and bystanders is a detriment to the providing of services at the scene of a crisis.

RESEARCHABLE ISSUE
#25

PROBLEM

Recipients and deliverers of responsive services evaluate the performance of these services in different ways. They have different perspectives on crisis and different expectations regarding appropriate action. Can evaluation criteria for the delivery of responsive services be developed which take into account the contrasting views of deliverer and receiver?

BACKGROUND

When citizens report a condition or event to an emergency service they often have implicit or explicit notions about what can and should be done. Service providers, on the other hand, are limited by law and practice. Thus, a burglary victim may insist that a police officer search his neighbor's apartment because he "knows" the neighbor is "bad" and probably committed the crime. When the officer, politely and patiently, explains the law the citizen is dissatisfied. Thus, acceptable or even superior performance as judged by superiors within the practitioner system, may be seen as inadequate by citizens.

SIGNIFICANCE

The quality of human service from a deliverer's standpoint is affected by how individual recipients view the service. If the expectations of the recipient are greater than or different from those of the deliverer, overall satisfaction is diminished. In addition to benefitting satisfaction, research into this area would stimulate citizen and neighborhood-group input into the service delivery systems.

RESEARCHABLE ISSUE
#26

PROBLEM

How does a police officer's level of general education (as opposed to specific job training) affect his or her job performance? Is there an optimal level of education associated with effective and efficient delivery of police services?

BACKGROUND

Police officers are agents of social control; they prevent crime and detect and apprehend criminals. Many police agencies, however, seek to acknowledge an expanded definition of the police role. Recognizing that much of what constitutes the day-to-day work of police officers is conflict management and response to complex social problems, agencies are developing practices and training programs which better prepare officers for such tasks. Some departments, for example, are requiring that officers develop a systematic body of knowledge about conditions in their assigned areas. Concurrently, officers are granted greater discretion and encouraged to develop problem-solving strategies which take such information into account.

Legitimization of this expanded role definition leads one to reexamine the place of advanced formal education for the police practitioner. Regarding the police officer as a "professional," some departments have decided to require more formal education of new officers or to encourage those already employed to update their education. There is an assumption behind such policies that the officer will profit from: 1) the specific knowledge gained, 2) the personal discipline developed through scholarship, 3) an exposure to different points of view, 4) an analysis of social problems, and 5) increased self-awareness.

SIGNIFICANCE

If increased formal education does improve the day-to-day work of police officers it should be evident in the provider-recipient interaction. Officers with advanced educations should show greater understanding of the communities in which

they work, be more empathetic toward the persons with whom they come into contact, and be more effective and productive. If such is the case, police departments may be justified in raising their educational requirements or in providing financial assistance to officers for continuing education. On the other hand, increased educational requirements reduce the pool of eligible job applicants. If higher education does not improve an officer's effectiveness, it is not in the best interests of police departments to require it.